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Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8587
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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
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AMEMBASSY GABORONE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PRETORIA 4395

EXDIS

LUSAKA FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND ASST. SEC. MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PINT SF RH
SUBJ: PRETORIA TALKS ON RHODESIA

THE SETTING:
1. THE RHODESIAN ISSUE POSES PERHAPS THE MOST SERIOUS CRISIS FOR SOUTH AFRICA SINCE UNION. THE AFRIKANER LEADERS SEE A SERIES OF AWESOME STORMS LOOMING ON THE HORIZON. THEY ALREADY FEEL THEIR TOTAL EFFECT, BUT RHODESIA IS THE FIRST TO RUSH FULL FORCE UPON THEM. HOW THEY WEATHER THIS TEMPEST WILL TELL SOMETHING ABOUT THE COURSE AHEAD.

2. YOUR VISIT TO PRETORIA COMES IN THE AFTERMATH OF DEFIANT SPEECHES BY BOTH VORSTER AND PIK BOTHA ON FOREIGN PRESSURES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. THE PRIME MINISTER'S EMOTIONAL DECLARATION ON AUGUST 24 BEFORE
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THE CAPE PROVINCE NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS WAS THE INTREPID CRY OF A LEADER WARNING HIS PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR THE WORST. VORSTER WAS ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSCORE TO BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC LISTENERS SOUTH AFRICA'S REASONABLENESS ON THE ONE HAND BUT ITS DETERMINATION ON THE OTHER TO DRAW THE LINE AND SAY TO THE WORLD "DO YOUR DAMNEDEST."

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PARA. 11(E) AND OTHER CLARIFICATION:
3. THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THE DISCUSSIONS IN PRETORIA WILL BE THE ADDITION OF THE NEW PARAGRAPH 11(E) ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY. THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE LIKELY TO TAKE THE PARAGRAPH--EVEN THOUGH IT GOES NOWHERE NEAR AS FAR AS THE VERSION GIVEN NYERERE--AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF OUR CAVING TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND THEIR FRONT LINE PRESIDENT SPONSORS. NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE WE COULD SUCCESSFULLY RATIONALIZE THE PARAGRAPH AS ADDING A LOGICAL PROVISION, WHICH DOES NOT COMPROMISE THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE AGREEMENT OR CONTRADICT ANY BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS.

4. WE FACE A SERIOUS DILEMMA, HOWEVER, IN HOW WE APPROACH THE CLARIFICATION GIVEN THE VERSION WHICH IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS. SHOULD WE ATTEMPT TO SLIDE BY THE CLARIFICATION, WHETHER OR NOT THE SOUTH AFRICANS BEARD US ON IT, OR SHOULD WE FACE THE ISSUE HEAD ON AND ATTEMPT TO PUT THE CLARIFICATION IN THE BEST LIGHT POSSIBLE?

5. THERE HAS BEEN NO SPECIAL ATTENTION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS TO PRESIDENT NYERERE'S STATEMENT THAT THE US AND THE UK HAVE AGREED TO DISBANDING
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THE PRESENT RHODESIAN ARMY AND TO ITS REPLACEMENT WITH PF FORCES. NOR HAS ANY SAG OFFICIAL YET RAISED THE SUBJECT WITH ME OR THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR. BUT IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE ALERTED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW CONCEPT ON THIS KEY ISSUE. WE WOULD EXPECT BOTHA AND THE PRIME MINISTER TO INSIST ON AN EXPLANATION OF THE NEW PARAGRAPH AND POSSIBLY OF PRESIDENT NYERERE'S COMMENTS AS WELL.

6. I ANTICIPATE THAT IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS LEARN, OR WE TELL THEM, OF THE CLARIFICATION AS GIVEN TO NYERERE AND OTHERS, IT WILL SERIOUSLY INHIBIT VORSTER'S WILLINGNESS TO PRESS SMITH TO ACCEPT THE PACKAGE AND MAY EVEN PROMPT HIM TO PUSH FOR A RADICAL INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE FROM SOUTH AFRICA'S STANDPOINT (SEE PARAGRAPH 15 BELOW). THE SAG WOULD REACT STRONGLY FOR A COMPLEX OF REASONS. FIRST, THEY WOULD SEE IT AS PREJUDICING THE WHOLE PROCESS IN FAVOR OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND PROBABLY ASSURING ULTIMATE PF CONTROL OF ZIMBABWE REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THE ELECTION. THIS IS AN OUTCOME THEY DO NOT WISH TO ENDORSE. THEY WOULD ALSO PROBABLY

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FEAR THAT SOUTH AFRICAN THREATS ALONE WOULD NOT
COMPEL THE RHODESIANS TO ACCEPT THE PLAN WITH THE
NEW PARAGRAPH AS CLARIFIED, BUT THAT THE ACTUAL
APPLICATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC
PRESSURE WOULD BE NECESSARY. IN THIS CASE, THE
SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD CONFRONT THE GREAT DILEMMA
THEY HOPED ABOVE ALL TO AVOID: WHETHER TO GIVE IN
TO US AND UK PRESSURE AND ASSUME THE BURDEN OF
FORCING RHODESIA TO ACCEPT CONDITIONS SOUTH AFRICA
ITSELF BELIEVES UNFAIR, OR TO STAND FAST AND BEAR
THE "DAMNEDEST" THE WORLD CAN DO. THE FORMER COURSE,
THE SOUTH AFRICANS KNOW, WOULD CONFIRM THE EFFECTIVE-
NESS OF THREATS AGAINST IT AND WOULD HAVE OBVIOUS
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NAMIBIAN AND APARTHEID ISSUES.
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ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE STANDFAST OPTION ENDED IN
EVENTUAL CAPITULATION, IT WOULD MAGNIFY THE BROADER
CONSEQUENCES FOR SOUTH AFRICA.

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EXDIS

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7. DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO THEM. BASED ON THE LONDON TALKS AND THEIR "UNDERSTANDING" THAT DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD THE RHODESIAN AND PATRIOTIC FRONT FORCES WOULD BE KEPT APART, BOTHA VERY LIKELY WON VORSTER'S AND THE CABINET'S APPROVAL TO ENCOURAGE SMITH TO ACCEPT THE PLAN AS "THE BEST THAT COULD BE OBTAINED." ADDITION OF PARAGRAPH 11(E) AS CLARIFIED WOULD BE VIEWED AS CONTRADICTORY TO THE CONCEPT THAT THE ELECTIONS SHOULD DETERMINE THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT. ALREADY UNDER FIRE IN THE CABINET, THE SPELLING OUT OF THE BASIS OF THE NEW ZIMBABWE ARMY IN FAVOR OF THE PF WOULD MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR BOTHA TO SELL TO HIS COLLEAGUES AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO JUSTIFY TO THE AFRIKANER AND ENGLISH ELECTORATE.

AVOIDING THE ISSUE
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8. WE COULD ATTEMPT TO AVOID THE ISSUE BY LIMITING OUR INITIAL DISCUSSION TO THE TEXT OF THE NEW PARAGRAPH. IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS SHOULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF PRESIDENT NYERERE'S STATEMENT, WE COULD DODGE THE QUERY BY RESPONDING THAT THE BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMATION OF THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY AND FOR DETERMINING THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND RHODESIAN FORCES. IF PUSHED, WE COULD REASSERT THAT THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER WOULD MAKE THESE DECISIONS AND THAT WE WOULD HAVE FULL CONFIDENTCE IN HIS IMPARTIALITY. DAVID OWEN MIGHT ALSO SAY SOME THING ABOUT THE KIND OF PERSON THEY HAVE IN MIND FOR RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AS FURTHER REASSURANCE THAT A SELL-OUT OF THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES IS NOT CONTEMPLATED.

9. IF WE PURSUED THIS COURSE IN PRETORIA, OBVIOUSLY WE WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW A SIMILAR LINE IN SALISBURY. IN ADDITION, WE SHOULD SUBSEQUENTLY SEEK ASSURANCES FROM NYERERE AND THE OTHER FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS THAT THEY WOULD MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE PERSONAL CLARIFICATIONS FROM US AND UK LEADERS REGARDING PARAGRAPH 11(E).

10. THERE ARE SEVERAL PROBLEMS WITH THIS OPTION. IT IS HIGHLY UNCERTAIN THAT THE CLARIFICATIONS--PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY ARE IN WRITING--WILL NOT EVENTUALLY SURFACE. MOREOVER, IN THE COURSE OF IMPLEMENTING PARAGRAPH 11(E), IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER TO RETIONALIZE DECISIONS REGARDING PATRIOTIC FRONT

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REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW ZIMBABWE ARMY WITHOUT
REVEALING THE PRIVATE COMMITMENT. THUS, CHARGES OF
DISSEMBLING COULD COME BACK TO HAUNT US. FINALLY,
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IF THE SOUTH AFRICANS PRESS US ON THE SUBJECT, IT
MAY BE APPARENT THAT WE ARE HIDING SOMETHING AND
THEY MAY IMAGINE THAT WE ARE CONTEMPLATING FAR WORSE
THINGS FROM THEIR STANDPOINT.

THE BEST LIGHT
11. THE OTHER OPTION OPEN TO US IS TO PUT THE NEW
PROVISION WITH ITS CLARIFICATION IN THE BEST LIGHT
POSSIBLE AND, CONSISTENT WITH THE POSITION WE HAVE
TAKEN WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS, OFFER WHAT
CONCESSIONS WE CAN.

12. I BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE WITHIN THESE LIMITS
TO ELABORATE ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW PROVISION
AND ITS CLARIFICATION IN A WAY WHICH MIGHT SIGNIFICANTLY
MITIGATE THE EFFECT IN PRETORIA AND SALISBURY. I BASE
THIS CONCLUSION ON THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING
THE PACKAGE:
--IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IT IS GOING TO BE UP TO THE
BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER TO DECIDE HOW AND WHEN TO MOVE
IN THE DIRECTION OF A NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY.

--THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT
BEARING ON THE SHAPE OF THE NEW ARMY.

--ENTIRE UNITS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES COULD BE
INCLUDED IN THE NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY ON INDEPENDENCE DAY
AND THUS SUCH UNITS WOULD RETAIN THEIR INTEGRITY DURING THE
ENTIRE TRANSITION PERIOD.

--PLANNING FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL
ARMY AND ITS COMMAND STRUCTURE WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE
INDEPENDENCE AS WOULD THE DEMOBILIZATION OF SOME PATRIOTIC
FRONT AND RHODESIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AND ELEMENTS. BUT NOT
UNTIL INDEPENDENCE DAY WOULD THE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED AND THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT FORCES AND THE RHODESIAN ARMED FORCES FORMALLY
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BE DISBANDED AND UNITS ABSORBED INTO THE ZIMBABWE ARMY.

13. THESE ASSUMPTIONS APPEAR TO BE CONSISTENT WITH

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PRESIDENT CARTER'S AUGUST 14 MESSAGE TO NYERERE AND WITH
OTHER OFFICIAL US-UK PRONOUNCEMENTS. IF THESE ASSUMPTIONS ARE
CORRECT, THE NEW PARAGRAPH WITH ITS CLARIFICATION WOULD NOT
MEAN THE RAPID DISSOLUTION OF THE ENTIRE
RHODESIAN FORCE BUT A PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION TO
PROCEED UNDER THE CLOSE SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND THE COMMAND OFFICERS HE BRINGS IN
TO ASSIST HIM IN THIS RESPONSIBILITY.

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EXDIS

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14. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, STILL BE OPEN TO CHARGES THAT
THE CLARIFICATION HAD DESTROYED THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE
AGREEMENT BY GRANTING PREDOMINANCE TO THE PATRIOTIC
FRONT FORCES. OUR REPLY TO THIS COULD BE THAT SOME
DECISION ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE ZIMBABWE ARMY WAS
NECESSARY AND THAT GIVEN THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL
REALITIES IT WAS REASONABLE AND FAIR TO ASSUME THAT
THE PATRIOTIC FRONT FORCES WOULD FORM THE LARGER PROTION
OF THE NEW INDEPENDENT ARMY, ALTHOUGH HOW THE VARIOUS
BLACK COMPONENTS RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE WHITE
UNITS WILL ONLY BE DETERMINED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE
ELECTIONS AND THE WISHES OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP.
AGAIN, WE COULD EXPRESS OUR CONFIDENCE THAT THE
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, WHOSE TASK WILL BE TO MAINTAIN

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LAW AND ORDER DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, WILL
DO NOTHING THAT WOULD UNDERMINE STABILITY.

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THE INTERNAL OPTION:
15. UP TO NOW, SOUTH AFRICA'S STRATEGY ON RHODESIA
HAS BEEN TO COOPERATE IN THE SEARCH FOR AN INTERNATIONAL
AGREEMENT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING OPEN THE
POSSIBILITY OF SUPPORTING AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.
VORSTER MAY WELL CONCLUDE AFTER HEARING THE CLARIFICATION
OF PARA. 11(E) THAT IT DOES NOT AFFORD A SOLUTION WITH
WHICH HE WANTS TO BE ASSOCIATED. IN THIS CASE HE MAY
CHOOSE NOT TO REJECT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PACKAGE DURING
THE FORTHCOMING TALKS BUT TAKE A SEEMINGLY NON-COMMITAL
STANCE WHILE URGING SMITH TO GET ON WITH AN INTERNAL
SETTLEMENT.

16. PERCEIVING A CLOSING OF THE RING, SMITH IN FACT
APPEARS TO BE PREPARING TO FORM A "BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT"
WITH A NUMBER OF BLACKS, INCLUDING SITHOLE, IMMEDIATELY
AFTER THE AUGUST 31 ELECTION. SMITH PROBABLY HOPES
THAT AN EARLY MOVE TO A "BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT"
FOLLOWING HIS RECEIPT OF A STRONG MANDATE FROM THE
WHITE POPULATION WILL SOMEHOW GIVE HIM A NEW LEASE ON
LIFE AND ALSO POSSIBLY STILL ALLOW HIM TO HEDGE ON THE
ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE PRINCIPLE. SITHOLE LIKEWISE WILL
PERCEIVE THE FORMULA ON SECURITY FORCES AS WORKING
AGAINST HIS INTERESTS AND THUS WILL BE PREDISPOSED
EVEN FURTHER TOWARD AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. MUZOREWA,
WHO HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY A NUMBER OF HIGH LEVEL
DEFECTIONS--SOME OF WHOM MAY HAVE BEEN BOUGHT OVER BY
SITHOLE AND PERHAPS INDIRECTLY BY SMITH--IS ALSO VERY
LIKELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW
SECURITY PROVISIONS. ALTHOUGH MUZOREWA RECENTLY
REJECTED THE IDEA OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, HE MAY
BECOME MORE AMENABLE TO AN EARLY DEAL.

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17. VERY LIKELY THE SAG KNOWS THAT HALF-WAY MEASURES
BY SMITH WILL SERVE NO PURPOSE, BUT THAT IF THE INTERNAL
OPTION IS TO BE VENTURED, A DRAMATIC MOVE IS REQUIRED
AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PACKAGE. BOTHA
TOLD SMITH DURING HIS AUGUST 4 VISIT TO SALISBURY THAT
THE INTERNAL OPTION WOULD NOT WORK UNLESS (A) THE

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SOVIETS VETO THE PACKAGE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, OR (B) SMITH WAS WILLING TO GIVE THE BLACK MODERATES ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS. THUS, IF SOUTH AFRICA REACHES THE CONSLUSION THAT THE SHOWDOWN HAS ARRIVED ON COERCING SMITH ON THE NEW PLAN, IT COULD DECIDE TO USE ITS MUSCLE TO ACHIEVE THE INTERNAL OPTION. IN THAT CASE, THE SAG, I BELIEVE, WOULD PRESS SALISBURY FOR A SWEEPING INTERNAL ACCORD THAT WOULD CONCEDE IMMEDIATELY THE PRINCIPLE OF ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE. IT MIGHT EVEN INCLUDE THE RESIGNATION OF SMITH IN FAVOR OF A PRE-ARRANGED WHITE-BLCK GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE ITS ACCEPTABILITY.

18. SMITH WILL BE IN PRETORIA ON SATURDAY (AUGUST 27) AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS WILL DOUBTLESS CONSULT WITH HIM ON THE OPTIONS OPEN TO THEM.
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